

Your Home Public Library  
PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN

Your Home Public Library is committed to serving its community during difficult times.

The Your Home Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this Pandemic Response Plan in compliance with New York State Labor Law 27-c and pursuant to its authority under its charter, bylaws, New York Education Law Sections 226 and 260, 8 NYCRR 90.2, and Article 2 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law. We also consider it our duty to develop these measures to keep our services accessible at this time.

Staff at Your Home Public Library have the authority to enforce these measures like any other of the Library's Rules. Concerns about this policy should be directed to the Library Director. Thank you for honoring these measures, which are designed to keep our community safe, while allowing access to the library.

Your Home Public Library operates per relevant law and Executive Orders, including those pertaining to mandatory workforce reductions. Therefore, the temporary practices in this Policy may be further modified as needed to conform to relevant Orders.

**Purpose:**

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of a pandemic or other public health emergency.

The Library will plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak. In addition, during any public health emergency organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of county, state or federal health or government officials. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the Library can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Library Director.

**Decisions:**

The Library Director, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will make decisions during a pandemic infectious disease outbreak regarding YHPL health protection supplies, communication about the pandemic with staff and public, and curtailment of services and/or closing of libraries. The Library Director may alter staffing assignments during the outbreak. If the Director is unavailable, the most senior librarian take their place.

**Continuity of Operations Plan—Pandemic:**

When there is serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for several weeks or more. Therefore, this plan differs from a general emergency preparedness policy or procedure. With an emergency preparedness policy, there is an assumption that staff will return to the building or begin recovery work almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as after a fire or storm).

**Library Closure:**

Your Home Public Library may temporarily close or limit services because of a public health emergency such as an epidemic/pandemic in the event that any of the following occur:

1. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by Broome County Health Department, New York State Department of Health or other State or local government officials.
2. If a Library employee has been diagnosed with the infectious disease, YHPL may temporarily close to allow for proper cleaning and quarantining procedures.

3. At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees.
4. At the discretion of the Library Director based on emergency conditions.

**Levels of Library Closure:**

- Complete Closure: no staff in the building at any time.
- Library Closure with Essential Services Only: essential Library employees may be required to work from home or on site during closures to perform necessary duties, such as payroll, bill paying, building maintenance, emptying book drops, etc.
- Library Closure with Reduced Services – staff may:
  - be allowed to work inside the building, although the building is closed to the public
  - be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
  - be assigned to clean the building

**Plan Implementation Topics:**

- Hygiene
- Staffing and Services
- Exposure to Communicable Disease
- Cleaning of Contaminated Areas
- Communication
- Safety Practices
- Recovery

**Hygiene:**

1. A list of good hygiene practices will be posted on all staff bulletin boards.
2. Hand sanitizers will be provided at all public service desks, at public computer reservation stations, and all staff work areas.
3. Hand washing awareness signs will be posted in all restrooms.
4. Staff will be provided with disinfecting wipes and disposable gloves to assist in keeping work areas sanitized. Priorities include door handles, hand rails, telephones, and keyboards.
5. Disposable gloves will be provided for employees to use when needed when interacting with patrons or handling materials.
6. Staff is encouraged to use good personal measures (cover one's mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing, wash hands often, avoid touching one's eyes, nose or mouth, etc.) and to practice safe social distancing of at least 6 feet.

**Staffing and Services:**

During a pandemic every effort will be made to maintain library services. Due dates, renewals, and overdue policies may be relaxed during this time.

The Library Director will authorize any needed service changes. The Library Director will consult with the YHPL Board of Trustees, Four County Library System, and local/state/federal officials as needed on these changes.

Public meeting room use, public programs, and public use of Library equipment may be curtailed or eliminated.

Staff may be re-assigned to a work area in a different area than usual, depending upon available personnel.

The Library Director will determine any changes in library hours or library closings due to the number of employees off work or public health directives. Staff might be instructed to stay home.

In compliance with any state or local government order requiring reduction of the Library's onsite workforce, the Director will implement such reductions consistent with the applicable order and the Description of Essential Positions set forth at Appendix A.

Essential employees required to be on site in the event of a closure will be provided with training in necessary tasks. Shifts will be staggered to comply with any applicable state or local government order requiring reduction of the Library's onsite workforce; for example, there may be no more than two employees permitted on site at one time. All employees working onsite must follow all CDC guidelines regarding social distancing, wearing masks, etc.

All employees required to work from home as a result of a state or local government order will be provided with a library laptop if needed, with all of the required software installed on the laptop for their particular job.

Essential employees will be required to use daily log-in sheets to document when they were at the Library, in order to facilitate the Library's ability to complete any necessary contact tracing and/or provide benefits available to employees.

**Exposure to Communicable Disease:**

If required by local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders, health screening practices will be implemented for employees. In the event an employee is exposed to a known case of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency, exhibits symptoms of such disease, or tests positive for such disease, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. The employee must not report to the Library and must notify the Library Director.
2. The Library Director will notify local and state health departments and follow applicable guidance.
3. The Library Director and employee will work to determine which other staff members were in close contact with the employee.
4. The Library Director and employee will work to determine which areas of the Library and/or Library equipment should be considered contaminated and closed for cleaning.

The Library will adhere to all applicable local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders, and its own policies, regarding available leave time and/or compensation.

**Cleaning of Contaminated Areas:**

If an employee is known or suspected to have been exposed to the communicable disease, the Library will immediately implement the following measures to close off and clean the contaminated area(s) and equipment:

1. The Library will immediately close for a period of time as determined by the Library Director to be sufficient for proper cleaning protocols.
2. The Library will be cleaned by the Cleaning staff and Library Director using approved products and wearing proper PPE.
3. Professional services may be hired to clean at the discretion of the Library Director.

**Communication:**

Information from public health authorities and referral information about the pandemic will be widely disseminated via Health Department and YHPL print and online resources. This will include awareness of symptoms, how the disease is spread, preventative measures, and how to care for someone who is ill.

The Library Director will contact staff either via phone and/or email if needed to alert staff to critical news affecting library services. Up-to-date information about the pandemic will also be provided to all staff via YHPL email, phone, and staff bulletin boards. Changes in service and library hours necessitated by a pandemic will be publicized in print and online resources.

**Safety Practices**

The Library will comply with all applicable health and safety requirements determined by local and state departments of health to be necessary to contain the spread of the communicable disease. Toward that end, the Library may, among other actions, require all people on the premises to abide by the following safety practices:

- All employees and patrons will wear face masks/shields covering mouth and nose.
- All Personal Protective Equipment, such as masks and gloves, required for staff will be purchased by the Library.
- All employees and patrons will follow social distancing signs/floor markers and stay at least 6 feet from others whenever possible.
- Use of hand sanitizer before using Library computers/equipment is strongly encouraged.
- All Library materials and shared surfaced will be disinfected after each use.
- Any other safety practices required by New York State, Broome County Public Health Department, the Centers for Disease Control, or OSHA.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as required by local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders, such as masks and gloves, will be provided by the Library. Employees may provide their own PPE if they desire and if it complies with all local, state or federal laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and guidance. Employees will be required to comply with all PPE requirements and will be subject to disciplinary action for failure to do so.

The Library will keep a supply of PPE in storage in the event of a public health emergency, will monitor supply levels, and will obtain supplies consistent with its purchasing policies and practices. PPE will be stored at the Circulation Desk for easy access.

**Recovery:**

Full or partial library services will be restored as conditions permit. Public programs and meeting room use will resume when recommended by public health authorities and at the discretion of the Library Director.

Staffing needs will be evaluated and a return to full staffing will be instituted as soon as possible, depending on staff health, building conditions and whether all requirements given by the New York State and Broome County Public Health have been met. Staff may be asked to return in shorter and/or staggered shifts to prepare the Library for reopening. Once the State and County Department of Health have approved reopening, staff scheduling needs will be determined by the Library Director.

This Pandemic Response Plan will be published in a clear and conspicuous location at the Library and on the Library's website. A copy will be provided to all employees.

Board Approved: 3/9/2021

**Appendix A:**

**List of Essential Positions**

- Library Director
- Maintenance/Cleaning staff
- Account Clerk
- Librarians